A Joyful Community of Faith loving God by serving all people including the least, the last, and the lost.

Pathways

Fourth Sunday in Lent - 2021

News from the Eureka Springs United Methodist Church

It is now been a year since the pandemic struck and we closed the church for in-person worship in order to keep people safe. Recently we have reopened, and we have had small crowds of about forty folks participating in the building. We will continue to record and livestream our services as that will now become an essential part of our ministries, so do not think you are being left out if you are not here in person. Holy Week is nearly upon us, and we will observe Maundy Thursday and Good Friday with two special services that will begin at 6 PM in the sanctuary. These are small and intimate liturgies by candlelight that help move us towards Easter. There will be special music. We will also have a Sunrise Service in our outdoor worship area, followed by breakfast (breakfast burritos wrapped in foil). New CDC guidelines show that it is safe to gather in groups as we each get the vaccine. This past week the Mayor and City Council presented our church with the “Community of the Year” award from the Arkansas governor in recognition of our year long efforts to keep people fed who are struggling with COVID-19 or its economic effects. We have had countless donors and volunteers to help us in this effort, but truly, it would not have been possible were it not for your faithful generosity over the past year to keep this church open and functioning. Thank you for stepping up and enabling us to weather this pandemic. We have delivered nearly 20,000 meals and driven countless miles to help everyone in Carroll County impacted by this virus. Today we tackle the problem of “Christian Nationalism,” the creeping influence of partisan politics that are poisoning our churches. Scripture is often taken out of context to support partisan positions and to justify policies that have little to do with God’s Word. It is time we place God first and our patriotism a distant second. On another note, internet speeds are crucial for live-streaming, and when those speeds are slow we are forced to simply record the service and post it at noon. This is completely out of our hands until we can find a provider that can guarantee a fast Internet.
Things are still very much in the air about General Conference, Jurisdictional Conference, and the plans for moving forward. The Conservative faction of the Methodist Church has announced the formation of the “Global Methodist Church,” this preserves their stance against homosexuals. In the coming months we will struggle with their departure and what this means for the future of the United Methodist Church.

Despite the pandemic we have had a wonderful year of giving. We met our budget and expanded our missions as we served those who were hungry and sick throughout our community. We created digital worship and bible studies reaching an audience of nearly a thousand. None of this would be possible without your generosity and faithfulness. Let’s look forward to what 2021 holds for our church. God is good! All the time! Scan your phone’s camera over the QR code to be taken to a secure site to donate electronically.

Widows and widowers support group meets on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month at noon in fellowship hall (with masks & social distancing.) This is an active and growing group of folks who help each other through difficult times. If you are considering getting help come to one meeting and hear how others have faced similar problems. Contact: Virginia Voiers for more info at 479-981-1097 or vavoiers@icloud.com

Our livestream is now found on our church Facebook Page, and we also have a YouTube Channel under First United Methodist Church of Eureka Springs. It is important to remember that our audience reach on Facebook is completely dependent on YOU! The more you like, share, and watch, the more Facebook pushes our page to more people. If you want a way to help out, then by all means “like” and “share”!

Our digital study on racism and Social justice is now in its fourth week. We have had some great discussions (you can watch via the link on the group page) and some great posts and suggestions for further reading and actions. Currently we have over 100 people involved in all sorts of ways. You do not necessarily need to be available for the ZOOM discussion groups on Tuesday at noon and at 6. Videos of those discussions are posted on the group page. So join us and follow along, or actively participate, or post your questions and thoughts. Please send Facebook requests to join Blake Lasater.

United Methodist Women are back in Person! Join us on March 16th at 1:00 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall, for “A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial”. This annual Lenten event emphasizes prayer and selfless giving. Through this “3rd mile” sacrificial giving, United Methodist Women have improved the health, education and economic status of women and children in the US and countless other countries around the world.
Join us live at 10 AM via the “First United Methodist Church of Eureka Springs” Facebook page or Sunday afternoon you may watch it on YouTube, look for channel, “First United Methodist Church of Eureka Springs” But please “share” the post or link as your witness to help us spread the Good News of God’s Love

Prelude & Greeting

The Lenten Candle Ritual
(see page 5 for the liturgy)

First Song

Morning Prayer
Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done. On Earth, as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day, our daily bread, and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Listening to the Scriptures

A Prayer for Illumination

Creator of all peoples and Sustainer of all creation, as the scriptures are read,
by the gift of your Holy Spirit, take away the dullness of our minds and the
distraction in our hearts from hearing your Word and doing your work
through Jesus Christ our teacher and redeemer. Amen

Source: https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Prayers-for-illumination

A Reading from: Daniel 3:24-30

Thanks be to God for the Gift of the Scriptures

Thanks be to God

Special Music: Jesus, Gentle Lamb - Becca Ritter

The Message “Deliverance from Unfaithfulness” Rev Blake Lasater

Giving & Receiving

We invite you to participate with us by gathering your own elements of bread and wine, as well as water,
the symbol of our baptism.

Sending Forth

A Musical Benediction

Go in Peace, and may the good Lord bless and keep you,
may the good Lord bless and keep you, till we meet,
till we meet again. Amen, Amen, Amen.
Our Music

Song After Candle Ritual:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

Opening Music:

Great and mighty is the Lord our God
Great and mighty is He
Great and mighty is the Lord our God
Great and mighty is He

Lift up your banner, let the anthems ring,
praises to our king.
Great and mighty is the Lord our God
Great and mighty is He
Great and mighty is the Lord our God
Great and mighty is He

Faithful, faithful, faithful is our God
Faithful, faithful, faithful is our God
Faithful, faithful, faithful is our God
Faithful, faithful, faithful is our God
I'm reaping the harvest God promised me
Take back what the devil stole from me
And I rejoice today, for I shall recover it all
Yes, I rejoice today, for I shall recover it all

“Together” by Steven Curtis Chapman sung by Bren

Special Music: Jesus, Gentle Lamb - Becca Ritter
Lent 2021

From Darkness to Light: Stories of Deliverance & Hope

Lent Week Four: Deliverance from Unfaithfulness

It is hard being a faithful Christian. There are so many things that divide our allegiances, so many voices that vie for our loyalty. The first commandment is the most important: we are to bow to no other gods besides our Creator in Heaven. But placing God first is not as easy as it sounds. Our world abounds in ideologies and politics; it abounds in theologies and partisanship. We say we place God first, but our loyalties are easily divisible and our priorities quickly grow askew. Worship is nothing less than our first priority, and it is difficult to confess that God is not nearly the priority that we profess God to be. Jesus said all the law could be summed up in two actions: love God and love everyone in this world. Yet ideologies and theologies distract and compete for our loyalty, and if we were honest we would admit our unfaithfulness is much greater than our faithfulness. Idols are not just stone statues, but economic and political realities that demand our worship. It is hard being faithful when we must choose between God and this world, especially when the world holds the power to cast us into the fiery furnace of poverty, powerlessness, and even death. The powers and principalities of this world control the manifold strings of our destinies, and if we are not watchful and courageous, we will very soon bow to them rather than our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. We seek the faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego — faithful people of God who bravely faced the fiery furnace of worldly wrath rather than to bow to the economic and political realities of Babylon. The world will always make us choose between faith and unfaithfulness. When our love grows cold towards those who do not agree with us, we have surrendered to unfaithfulness, but when we choose love we once again worship the God who is love itself.

We confess our unfaithfulness, and how we have chosen the ideologies of political parties, politicians, and pundits over your teachings, O God of Love. We have taken your name in vain, to justify teachings, beliefs, and policies that have nothing to do with your Word or your Love. We have falsely used scripture to justify our political opinions, instead of allowing scripture to move us to actually follow you. We have bowed down to the idols and gods of this world because their economic and political power were so tempting. We sought an easy faith that made no demands of us, when we should have asked for the courage to be faithful even in moments of great trial and sacrifice. Forgive us for our idolatry, not of worshipping stone idols, but the unseen ones of politics, economics, and religion. Forgive us for not allowing your Word to guide us, and forgive us for using your Word to justify our narrow-minded prejudices and opinions. May your mercy, grace, and forgiveness deliver us from the darkness of unfaithfulness to the light of true faith and action. Amen and Amen!

Hear these words of Assurance and Pardon:

Though the fire might sweep over us we will not perish; for the powers and principalities of this world hold no power over God’s people! God knows we have but little power, and yet when we keep God’s word and do not deny God’s ways, an open door is set before us, which no one is able to shut.

Leader: We owe no one our worship but God alone, and when we live in love we live in God.
People: We have found in Jesus Christ, the God of Love and Grace, we will follow only him!